



CEPPS/IFES Quarterly Report: 1 January – 31 March 2005

Ukraine: Measuring Public Opinion to Monitor Program Impact

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Project Period: 27 September 2004 – 1 April 2005

Total Budget: \$60,000 (includes \$10,000 add-on) Expenses Recorded to Date: \$56,530

Results Summary

During the reporting period, IFES completed the implementation of the 2004 Public Opinion in Ukraine project by fielding a nationwide post-election survey. IFES worked closely with USAID during the design phase of the post-election survey to ensure that the field instrument reflects USAID's information and analysis needs in Ukraine. IFES maintained regular communication with the Mission to discuss specific areas of interest to the Mission, and used these discussions to draft the questionnaire for the survey. The questionnaire incorporated questions that IFES used in the pre-election survey in order to track shifts in public opinion.

The post-election survey field work was completed from between February 15 and 28, 2005. In total, 1200 interviews were conducted throughout the country for a representative national sample. The margin of error for the sample was plus/minus 2.8% at a 95% confidence level. Analysis of the survey data was completed by mid March and provided to the Mission in writing and in a face-to face briefings according to the timeframe contained in the revised project description.

Background

Since 1994, IFES has conducted sociological research in Ukraine to monitor public opinion on a variety of issues related to democratization and public policy. USAID has used data from this research in the past to inform the design of many programs. With USAID/Ukraine now in year two of its current strategy, IFES is assisting the Mission to collect relevant data illustrating current public opinion on democracy and governance issues as a means of assessing programmatic impact.

The overarching objective of this year's research project is to build upon existing sociological research on political attitudes and expectations, and to analyze trends in the data over time. This research also presents an opportunity to establish additional data, which will be used to understand the post-election environment in which the USAID strategy will be implemented and against which to examine future program impact.

In light of the tumultuous events following the so-called Orange Revolution, Ukrainian society is clearly in the process of political reorganization. Credible and timely data on public attitudes toward democratic institutions and political processes, including the credibility of elected leaders, the Courts, and other governmental institutions will allow USAID and its partners to define program priorities in the coming months. The 2004 public opinion research also seeks to provide data on key questions of domestic and foreign policy, and provide critical insight into political, regional and generational splits that become evident in recent months.

Program Activities

2004 Public Opinion Research

In this quarter, IFES initiated and completed phase one of the survey research. This 2004 pre-election survey represents the 13th in a series of IFES surveys in Ukraine. The issues covered in this year's pre-election survey included attitudes and opinions on the economic and political situation in the country, confidence in political and legal institutions, attitudes toward the election process, interest and participation in the political process, and general attitudes toward democracy and the democratization process. Following completion of the data analysis of the pre-election survey, IFES began planning for the post-election survey following the scheduling of re-run second round elections on 26 December.

Pre-election Survey

Interviews for the pre-election survey were conducted in the period directly before the first round of the 2004 presidential elections Ukraine. Interviews were conducted between October 14 and 26. In total, 1200 interviews were conducted throughout the country for a representative national sample, and an additional 65 over-sample interviews were conducted in Kyiv. National-level data provided in this report is based on a weighted sample of 1200 respondents. The weighted sample is representative of the national population by regional distribution, urban/rural distribution, age, and gender. The margin of error for this sample is plus/minus 2.8% at a 95% confidence level.

The IFES report containing the analysis of the pre-election survey data is included as an attachment to this quarterly report. Briefly, the key findings of the pre-election survey were:

- A minority of Ukrainians (41%) say that they receive enough information on political developments and candidates to make a wise choice when voting. Thirty-five percent say that they receive barely enough information to make a wise choice, and 20% say that they receive little or no information that allows them to make a wise choice when voting.
- Forty seven percent of Ukrainians agree at least somewhat that voting can influence decision-making while an equal percentage disagree.
- Seventy nine percent of respondents indicate that they were very likely to vote in the presidential election and 13% say they were somewhat likely to vote.
- Most Ukrainians feel safe in voting however they wish in an election (71%). The importance of observers in the election process is highlighted by the fact that a majority agrees that the presence of international observers (67%), non-partisan domestic observers (66%), and political party observers (59%) helps to preserve the integrity of the election process in Ukraine.
- Fifty percent of respondents said that it is very or somewhat unlikely that the elections will be free and fair, and 36% said it is likely that the elections will be free and fair.
- Fifty-nine percent of Ukrainians say that Ukraine is not a democracy, compared to 23% who do think it is a democracy.
- Forty-eight percent say that only some of the political parties address issues facing the country, an increase from 35% in 2003.
- Most Ukrainians believe that political parties primarily exist to serve their own interests (62%) or those in power (33%) or in business (24%). Very few (13%) think that political parties serve the interests of ordinary Ukrainians.
- Seventy-six percent of Ukrainians rate the current economic situation in the country as being bad or very bad, while 19% rate it as good or very good.
- Twenty-two percent of Ukrainians do not think that reforms are taking place. Only four percent think that economic reforms are occurring too quickly compared to 39% who think they are taking place too slowly. Fourteen percent think reforms are occurring at the right pace.

- Two-thirds or more of all Ukrainians believe that corruption is a serious problem in the police, courts, universities and schools, hospitals, and tax authorities, and a further 65% think corruption is a serious problem in the customs authorities.
- National-level officials and institutions are far less likely to elicit confidence than local-level officials. Less than a third of Ukrainians say that they have a great deal or fair amount of confidence in the President, the cabinet of ministers, and the *Verkhovna Rada*.

Post-election Survey

In December 2004, IFES proposed to expand the scope of the post-election survey to adequately measure shifts in public attitudes and perceptions that emerged as a result of the contested second-round presidential elections. In this request, IFES underscored the need to enhance the post-election questionnaire by including questions posed in the survey prior to the election, and for which IFES possesses trend data from a decade of previous surveys in Ukraine in order to amass useful longitudinal data. USAID/Kyiv approved this request, providing IFES with an additional \$10,000 to expand the survey beyond the modest effort proposed in the original project description. Concurrent with this request for add-on funds, USAID also approved extending the project until 1 April 2005 to allow for adequate time for comprehensive post-election analysis.

The post-election survey field work was completed from between February 15 and 28, 2005 following the inauguration of President Yushchenko. In total, 1200 interviews were conducted throughout the country for a representative national sample. The margin of error for the sample was plus/minus 2.8% at a 95% confidence level.

Briefly, the key findings of the post-election survey were:

- Nearly all Ukrainians (92%) say they were interested in the recent presidential elections - six in ten (59%) say they were very interested.
- A majority (72%) of Ukrainians say they are very or somewhat interested in matters of politics and government. For the previous three years, interest in politics and government has stood at roughly 60%.
- Majority of nearly six in 10 (57%) believe the December second-round elections were mostly or completely free and fair and expect the March 2006 elections will be mainly free and fair (56%). Far fewer believe that the first round elections in October (33%) or canceled-November second round elections (26%) were mostly or completely free and fair.
- A slim majority (53%) strongly or somewhat believes the cancellation of the November 21 election and the holding of another election on December 26 represented a victory for democracy that will benefit all Ukrainian citizens. By contrast a minority of three in ten (30%) strongly or somewhat agree that the cancellation of the November election and the holding of another election in December benefited only some groups.
- A plurality of more than 4 in 10 (43%) say the result of the December elections has placed Ukraine on the right track toward stability and prosperity in the future.
- Roughly on par with results from previous years, thirty percent of Ukraine citizens believe Ukraine is a democracy. However, many more of those who say Ukraine is not a democracy think Ukraine is moving towards a democracy. For the first time since the question was first asked in 1997, a slim majority (53%) now say Ukraine is moving toward becoming a democracy. In 2004, only 22% thought Ukraine was moving toward democracy.
- Reducing unemployment is top priority for the new government (70%). Improving the quality of the healthcare system (46%) and pension payments (43%) are also top concerns for citizens of Ukraine.

- A majority expect to see at least slight improvements in the economy (65%), the fight against corruption (63%), respect for human rights (59%), and political stability (54%) over the next two years. Roughly three in ten expect to see significant improvements when it comes to the economic situation of Ukraine (29%), the fight against corruption (30%), respect for human rights by authorities (28%) and relations with Western countries (32%).
- A plurality (41%) describes the economic situation of Ukraine as “somewhat bad,” but there is hope it will improve in the near term. A majority expect the economy will improve a great deal (29%) or a slight amount (36%) over the next two year.
- More believe voting makes a difference. A majority of Ukrainians (53%) now say voting gives people like me a chance to influence decision-making in our country. In 2003 only twenty-five percent somewhat or strongly agreed with this statement.
- While only a minority (30%) say “People like you can have influence on the decision made by the government,” the percentage of Ukrainians who strongly or somewhat agree with this statement has doubled from 2003 year when only fourteen percent agreed with this statement.
- At the same time, a small minority (19%) believe that greater involvement in political affairs by Ukrainian citizen in the future will lead to chaos and instability in the country.
- A majority of Ukrainians (62%) say the demonstrations played at least some role in furthering democracy in Ukraine and seven in ten (70%) believe the demonstrations were a legitimate exercise of democratic rights and raised valid concerns about the fairness of the November second-round elections. A minority of twenty-nine percent completely or somewhat agree that the only purpose of the demonstrations was to create chaos.
- Seven in ten (69%) believe that the political parties that support Viktor Yushchenko played a primary role in organizing the demonstrations. NGOs (22%) and the media (22%) are also among top mentions. Nearly a quarter (23%) believes “outside forces” played a primary role in organizing the demonstrations.
- More say they strongly or somewhat believe that their vote was kept confidential by the election officials in the December 26 election (69% vs. 49%) and that the results of the new CEC reflected the way people voted more than in the November 21 election (62% vs. 30%).
- Two-thirds strongly or somewhat believe that domestic (68%), international (67%) and political party observers (66%) had a positive influence on the election results in the December elections. Just fewer than half believe that these observers had a positive influence on the November elections.
- Majorities of six in 10 (60%) believe the Supreme Court was justified in canceling the November 21 elections and holding another election on December 26. Six in 10 (62%) also say the Supreme Court was justified in declaring the December elections legitimate.
- The majority somewhat or strongly agree (62%) with the Verhovna Rada replacing the Central Election Commission after the November 21st election. And a slim majority (53%) believes the performance of the CEC was better than the previous one. Few (11%) think its performance was worse.
- Forty percent say they have a more positive view of the media than they did before election process began. Eleven percent says their impression is more negative.
- A plurality of four in 10 (42%) say they have a more positive impression of the Verkhovna Rada than they did at the beginning of the Presidential election process and the judicial system (41%).
- Confidence in the Verkhovna Rada has doubled since 2003. A Majority (54%) say they have a fair or great amount of confidence in the Verkhovna Rada, compared to twenty-six percent in 2003.

- A plurality of four in 10 (41%) say they have a more positive impression of the judicial system than they did at the beginning of the Presidential election process, and a majority (58%) say they somewhat or strongly believe that the court played a proper role during the electoral crisis in November and December.
- Similar to last year, thirteen percent of Ukrainians think that NGOs are essential and thirty-seven percent think they are necessary while a quarter (24%) say that NGOs are not very or not at all necessary.
- Only a handful has confidence in former President Kuchma. Six percent say they have a great deal or a fair amount of confidence in the former President.

From March 28-31, IFES Senior Research Rakesh Sharma traveled to Kyiv to hold a series of briefings and presentations. Sharma briefed USAID staff on key survey finds and provided a face-to-face briefing to Ambassador Herbst. Public presentations were held at UNIAN for various print and electronic media outlets generating a high degree of coverage in various media. Briefings were also held for domestic and international NGOs. An additional information session was held at National University Kyiv Mohyla Academy for political science students.

The final 2004 survey report, Public Opinion in Ukraine after the Orange Revolution, is attached to this quarterly report.